

# Montague Conservation Commission

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## MEETING MINUTES

**Thursday, September 10, 2015 – 6:30 pm**

**Upstairs Meeting Room, Town Hall, One Avenue A, Turners Falls, MA**

**Commissioners Present:** Mark Fairbrother - Chair, Justin Fermann (6:35), Sean Werle, Donna Francis and Alex Peterkin

**Commissioners Absent:** Deb Picking and Addie Rose Holland

**Staff:** Walter Ramsey - Agent

Mark Fairbrother called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM

### **Approval of Minutes July 30, 2015:**

**Motion** made by, Sean Werle to approved July 30, 2015 minutes. *Seconded by Alex Peterkin.* **Motion passed.** *Donna Francis abstaining*

**PUBLIC HEARING Continuation of Notice of Intent #2015-04 filed by David Svobada for the Walnut Street Condominium Association** for property identified as 28 Walnut Street (Assessors Map 13, Lot 9). Applicant plans to stabilize and restore 140 linear feet of eroding bank to protect residential units.

Mark Fairbrother stated that at the applicants have requested in writing for the hearing to be continued to October 8, 2015 at 6:30 PM.

Walter Ramsey had a meeting with Tim Ballou – Secretary of the Walnut Street Association regarding him stepping in to help facilitate this project. Tim Ballou will do some research and look over the materials to orient himself with the project and what needs to be done before the next meeting.

Mark Fairbrother declared that the hearing will be continued to October 8, 2015 at 6:30 PM

**DISCUSSION Jamie Pottern, Land Conservation Specialist - Review and consider supporting Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust's "Landscape Partnership Grant" application** This proposed project involves the conservation of a combined 500+ acres of land in Wendell and Montague. The Grant would include the Commission co-holding approximately 1 or 2 Conservation Restrictions (CRs) with Mount Grace.

**Guests:** Jamie Pottern and Jay Rasku – Conservation Specialists from Mt. Grace Land Trust

The process of the Landscape Partnership Grant came about from Bill Facey owner of Sugarbush Farm in Wendell that got neighbors together which led to being eligible for applying for the grant. The Wendell Conservation Commission voted to protect the land and hold the Conservation Restrictions jointly with Mount Grace Land Trust.

Mount Grace is hoping to partner with the Town of Montague to seek state grant funding that will help preserve Montague's rural character and ecological resources, maintain the Chapter 61 tax base and provide permanent public passive recreation opportunities. The Landscape Partnership Program grant is due on September 30, 2015.

There is a 50% reimbursement grant offered by the state that funds:

- Large conservation projects (minimum of 500 acres)
- Park development/construction in towns with populations under 6,000 (up to \$70,000)
- Development of natural resource protection zoning NRPZ bylaws (up to \$40,000) – Wendell has this.
- Maximum grant request of two (2) Million Dollars

The goal is to secure the state's LPG grant to protect special places in Wendell and Montague and help local communities consider new zoning options and a park project.

- 500 Acre core in both Wendell and Montague
- Potential for a park project in Wendell
- Town of Montague may pursue the NRPZ bylaw
- Proposed partners
  - Town of Wendell, Town of Montague, Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, Department of Fish and Game

The proposed participation for the Conservation Commission would be:

- Support and sign the LPG grant application
- Sign a letter of support
- If awarded funding:
  - Co-hold Conservation Restriction (CR) with Mount Grace on approximately 2 or 3 properties
  - If interested, conduct long-term stewardship monitoring of some or all CR properties

The Grant also requests Towns to explore and bring to Town Meeting to adopt a Natural Resource Protection By-law it will allow property owners to put in more house than typically allowed with the restriction that the back lots of property be put into conservation restriction. This is an implementation activity identified in the 2010 open space plan and has been discussed at the Planning Board meetings.

What is not shown but an important part of the project is that there are existing trails and this will help to link both the privately owned trails with the state trails while increasing recreation opportunities, wildlife corridors, while protecting water resources. It also helps to protect working farms with landscapes that have in the past been hard to find funding for.

There has been some discussion surrounding a name for the project; tentatively it is being called 7<sup>th</sup> Generation Working Lands Corridor Project.

Mount Grace and Montague would hold the CRs in Montague they would like to see if any other groups in town have interest in stewardship of the parcels. In holding a CR it brings in to play Article 97 which gives a stronger position to help keep it protected and opportunity of monitoring and stewardship (1 visit once a year with the baseline report/checklist and new monitoring reports to go back to Mount Grace) The enforcement responsibility could be held with Mount Grace. The commission expressed interest in holding CR's for this project.

A letter of support would help strengthen the grant application and show commitment to the project.

**Motion** made by, Justin Fermann for the Conservation Commission to endorse a letter in support of the Mount Grace Landscape Partnership Grant along with stewardship responsibilities. Seconded by, Sean Werle. **Motion passed unanimously.**

**Motion** made by, Sean Werle to recommend a letter in support of the Mount Grace Landscape Partnership by the Montague Selectboard endorsing the project. Seconded by, Donna Francis. **Motion passed unanimously.**

**Motion** made by, Donna Francis to permit Mark Fairbrother to sign on behalf of the Montague Conservation Commission the partnership agreement with the Mount Grace Land Trust and the Wendell Conservation Commission. Seconded by, Justin Fermann. **Motion passed unanimously.**

**Request for Determination of Applicability #2015-04 filed by John B. Rittall, Jr. for site work and septic system installation within 100 feet of a bordering vegetated wetland relating to construction of a new single family home on Ripley Road** (Assessors Map 49 Lot 16 (Parcel 1)).

**Guest:** John & Deb Rittall

Applicant is looking to install a leech field and create a walk out basement on the back of the house. The parcel is near the intersection with Route 63 there is a stream crossing which is mapped on USGS map as a perennial stream but documentation presented in the RDA states that the stream drainage is less than a square mile so it is not viewed as riverfront area.

Agent: All the wetlands are located down below the tree line with the house being outside of the 100 foot buffer zone. The parts that are located within the buffer zone are: the leach field, some of the tree clearing, and part of the grading that will need to be done. The purpose of the land clearing would be to create a backyard, add grading with a gentle slope and in the future for the installation of solar. The project will not change the infiltration or the runoff profile. There will be appropriate erosion controls during the project consisting of silt fences or hay bales.

**Motion** made by, Alex Peterkin to issue a Negative Determination (Box #3) for RDA #2015-04 filed by John Rittall Jr. Seconded by Justin Fermann. **Motion passed unanimously.**

**Other topics not anticipated within the 48 hours of posting**

- Emergency Certificate – Greenfield Road project is under construction and there is a culvert that is in worse condition than originally anticipated. Upon investigation, the engineer found deterioration and collapsing of the culvert between Randall Road and Hatchery Road. Due to the impending weather, the repairs had to be done on the spot and the stream was diverted. Everything is now back to the way it was before.

**Motion** made by Donna Francis to approve the emergency certificate work on Greenfield Road. Seconded by Justin Fermann. **Motion passed unanimously.**

**Motion** made by, Sean Werle to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by, Alex Peterkin. **Motion passed unanimously**

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:04 PM.

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_